

# BIOL 5407:W01 GRADUATE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

## Spring 2020

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Office Hours: MWF 11-11:50, TR 9-10:30, or by appt.

Webpage: <http://sulross.blackboard.com>

Textbook: Genoways, H.H. & L.M. Ireland. 2003. Museum Administration: An Introduction. AltaMira Press, Lanham, MD

### Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to learn the techniques and skills required to operate, curate, and manage a variety of biological collections. This will include proper handling, preservation, organization, and accessioning techniques for both zoological and botanical materials. The legal side of collection maintenance will be covered, in addition to practical applications of museums in research. The areas of museum science we will explore will include such disciplines as botany, zoology, geology, archeology, paleontology, and others.

### Course Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will learn about the practical side of collections management.
- 2) Students will acquire skills to work in a biological natural collection.
- 3) Students will analyze the aspects of museums and the law.
- 4) Students will document and catalogue specimens into collections.
- 5) Students will work as groups to synthesize a mock museum.

### Student Learning Outcomes

The biology student graduating with a MS in Biology should be able to:

- 1) Understanding and implementation of scientific methodology.
- 2) Utilization of field techniques toward addressing scientific questions.
- 3) Be able to utilize statistics toward the analysis of data within the discipline.
- 4) Be able to effectively disseminate scientific findings using both written and oral communication.

**Marketable Skills:** A student getting a degree in the Biological sciences would be expected to acquire the following marketable skills by graduation.

- 1) Students will be able to organize, analyze, and interpret data.
- 2) Students will be proficient at using presentation software.
- 3) Students will acquire experience in managing time and meeting deadlines.
- 4) Students will gain the ability to speak effectively and write concisely about scientific topics.
- 5) Students will acquire experience and guidance in the development of professional email correspondence.

### Grading:

Students are expected to complete all assigned exams and activities in the time indicated. The majority of the class grade will come from the semester project of designing a mock museum (200 pts), various quizzes/case studies (100 pts), and participation in museum volunteer activity (100 pts). Additional, the week prior to Spring Break, a midterm exam covering material up to that point will be administered on Blackboard for 100 pts. Also, a non-comprehensive final exam covering the second half of the term will be administered on Blackboard on the date of the final for another 100 point.

### Suggestion:

As per SRSU policy, students shall be dropped from the class with an F if they miss 20% (3 weeks) over the course of the semester. If you are unable to participate in class, please notify me by either e-mail, phone, or in person so that you will not be unnecessarily dropped from the course. Due to the nature and time line of this course, attendance activity will be required and late work will not be accepted.

**Lecture courtesy:** The general rules of classroom etiquette are below.

- 1) This is a web class, so continued activity in Blackboard is required. Not logging in, checking assignments, submitting work, or providing museum activity updates will result in a lack of activity attendance.
- 2) As this course is being offered electronically, professional correspondence is necessary. Please address all email to the professor, Indicate the course and your name in the email, and what your questions and concerns are. Please be advised that this is not the only class occurring this term, so helping me to keep things straight will only sped up my ability to reply.
- 3)

**Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request such accommodations because of physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility at 837-8203, FH 112.**

### **Tentative Lecture Outline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture topic</b>
Week 1	Introduction and Definitions Mission Statements and Bylaws
Week 2	Uses of Museum Specimens Field Notes and Obtaining Specimens
Week 3	Articles of Incorporation and the IRS Museum Organization: Directors and Boards
Week 4	Museum Organization: Structure of Groups Strategic Planning
Week 5	Museum Organization and Material Culture Budgets and Accounting
Week 6	Development Care and Maintenance of Nonbiological Material
Week 7	Personnel Management Preparation and Care of Invertebrates
Week 8	Pest Control Techniques & Midterm
Week 9	Spring Break
Week 10	Preparation and Care of Mammalian Specimens Preserving Material for Molecular Work
Week 11	Federal Permits by the USFWS Preparation and Care of other Vertebrate Specimens (and Plants)
Week 12	Facilities Management
Week 13	Ethics and Professional Conduct
Week 14	Marketing and Public Relations
Week 15	Public Programs
Week 16	Legal Issues and “Isms” Review for Final Exam
Week 17	Final Exam on Blackboard, complete by 12pm (noon) on May 4th

Note – This outline is subject to change for reasons of course interest, time constraint, or instructor whim. The exams will be administered on the dates given, unless material relevant for a given exam has not been covered. Under such cases, an exam may be moved a class period or two to aid in the clarity and understanding of the material.

#### Project requirements:

The primary project for this course will be designing a mock museum on paper as a group. As this is a graduate course, you will be working toward completing this goal individual. These mock museums will be due by 5pm on the Friday before the final (May 1st). Instructions for the assignment are based in part from the Exercise outlined on page ix in your textbook, with any modifications explained in the class notes.

Additionally, you will be required to pick a specific biological theme (zoology, botany, entomology, genetics, etc.), and get the topic approved prior to the midterm. Once approved, you need to design an exhibit to be put up in one of the WSB display cabinets in front of one of the East facing lecture halls. You will be expected to have your exhibit follow a theme, be educational, informative, and visually attractive and interesting to a general audience. Please be broad and open minded in your interpretation of this assignment, as it will be displayed to the public for at least a year's time. I will require you to pick a topic by the end of the January, and provide a rough diagram of your plan/design by the midterm. Ideally, this display will be sent to Sul Ross for instillation into one of the display cabinets by the end of the term.

Exams will be administered at the midterm and final. Material covered in these exams will be based on posted lecture notes and assigned readings. As such, the exams will cover a variety of material. Please be attentive throughout the term, as the exams will try to focus on main concepts rather than small finite details, but that details are still important (we are dealing with collections and the particulars are important).

The lab component of this class is being conducted as volunteer museum hours at a museum of your selection, after approval by the instructor. Please plan on trying to log a minimum of 30 hours of documented volunteer time at that museum, with closer to 40-45 hours being better as this is a graduate class. Document your volunteer hours and post your weekly experiences in the discussion forum. For proof of hours served, please provide a signed letter or form from the museum's volunteer coordinator for the hours volunteered.

Plagiarism Warning – There are lots of interesting sites on the internet that provide information about anything you could imagine. I expect you to use these to help you complete your assignments, but you may not copy or plagiarize. If you copy and paste, or fail to cite sources when you should have, you will not receive credit for the assignment or fail the course, depending on the severity of the plagiarism. If you are unsure about what plagiarizing is, that please check with me first!